

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO



Director's Notes

One of my favorite songs is an old Neil Sedaka song from 1961 called "Calendar Girl" with a lyric that says: "January, you start the year off fine." This certainly has been the case for us! January was jam-packed with meaningful connections and learning, not to mention a whole lot of rehearsal.

Pre-Professional students started 2026 off with 1:1 peer interviews before diving into an acting and scene study unit. Meanwhile, our Advanced Workshop students are tackling the complexities and subtextual relevance of the work of Stephen Sondheim. In Musical Theatre Workshop, students are performing songs from the Great American Songbook; and those in Fundamentals are busy perfecting their monologue performances.

Of course, I'd be remiss if I also didn't take the opportunity to share what an incredible experience it was for our students to welcome in Point Park University's Dean of the School of Theatre, Film, and Animation [and co-founder of the Jimmy Awards] – Kiesha Lalama! She was able to work with students in both of our advanced courses. It was an inspiring experience for all, and one that will be highlighted in greater detail in future communication!

This sixth issue of *The Director's Cut* heavily highlights our production of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying!" I hope you and your families will find the time to support the countless students and parent volunteers who have made this show possible. It runs February 4-8th. See you at the show!

With Gratitude,

Erich DiCenzo

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE
& ACTORS STUDIO

OPEN FOR BUSINESS!



We made it! After six weeks of hard work – and plenty of uncooperative weather patterns – the World Wide Wicket Company is ready to unlock its doors for the Opening Night of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying!" Over fifty members of our cast and crew, not to mention the countless parent volunteers, have been very hard at work to ensure that you leave happily smiling, infectiously humming, and non-stop tapping those toes! We hope that you will find the opportunity to support the students and our program by joining us for one of the performances of our NEW production run!

Employee Survey

Want to know what to look forward to when YOU see the show? Here are the favorite numbers of some our Cast & Crew!

"The opener – '*How to Succeed*' – because it sets the tone for the whole show! And it's so colorful!"

Mauro Manganello; Jenkins

"I've got to say '*Brotherhood of Man*' because it's the most Golden Age, flashy, Broadway-number coming out of the production. Three button suits. Bright colors. And tap shoes!"

Tristan Farmer; Twimble/Womper

"I'd say '*I Believe in You*' because it has two very compelling melodies in one song."

Daniel Plummer; TV Show Announcer

"I like '*Coffee Break*' because of the intense and sharp choreography."

Yoki Abiy; Assistant Stage Manager

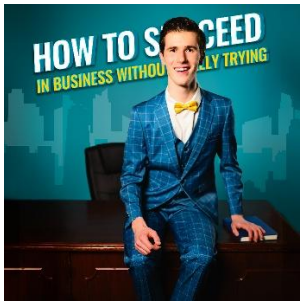
"I like '*Cinderella Darling*' because of the formations and the expressive characterization!"

Lucas Schnotala; Toynee

"My favorite number in the show has got to be '*I Believe in You*' because of the vanity choreography and the lighting effects. It's very cool because it shifts what could be a basic solo number into a cool spectacle!"

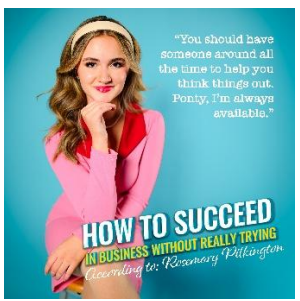
Nate Smith; Bratt

Cast Spotlights



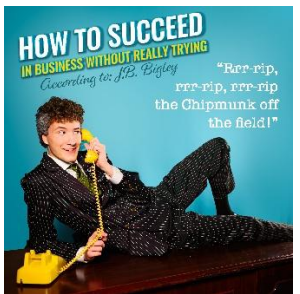
"How to Succeed...has been an absolute blast to be a part of! Getting to work with so many of my friends from across the Academy is always so much fun and has made for such an enjoyable process. This show is lighthearted, fun, high-energy, and so different from any show I've been a part of with MTAS. From an incredibly talented ensemble to a dedicated creative team, to the most hardworking parents of all time [Shout-Out to Mr. Blanchet!]. So much love and hard work have been put into this production, and we can't wait to share what we've been working on!"

John Poncy; J. Pierrepont Finch



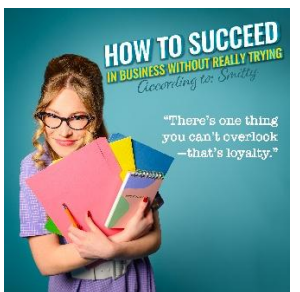
"Being part of How to Succeed... has been an unforgettable experience! This is my first Academy show, and I could not be more impressed with the process! I've been able to make so many new friends throughout the Academy and connect with people I never would have met otherwise. This show specifically has provided an incredible learning experience, as the clever script and comedic elements encourage lots of creativity and imagination. Each and every person involved has shown such kindness, professionalism, and commitment here at MTAS. I could not be more excited to share everyone's collective effort to an audience!"

Leah Graham; Rosemary Pilkington



"Being in an academy show never disappoints. The level of professionalism is so wonderful, especially for those of us planning to go into this as a career! I've made so many deep connections during this show. This cast is full of so many wonderful people, leading me to make at least five different secret handshakes with my castmates, and to always have someone offstage to cheer me on. Mix that with an incredibly talented tech team, some incredibly dedicated parents, and a script as cheesy and golden age-y as can be, working on How to Succeed has been a blast!"

Silas Blocker; J.B. Biggley



"From stepping into the role of Smitty, to finalizing comedic bits, and putting on the radiant costumes [Shout-Out Ms. Lori Crockett!], How to Succeed... has been such a rewarding process. Each year at MTAS I find myself impressed by the caliber of the cast and crew- hardworking, passionate, inclusive, and kind, are just a few words to describe this fantastic bunch of people. Every moment has been full of laughs and memories made with my closest friends and I cannot wait for everyone to see the show that so many people have worked tirelessly to create. I am so grateful for all of the parents, techs, and directors who have designated their time to the show and all of us. This electric golden-age comedy is one you don't want to miss!"

Allie Blanchet; Smitty

FROM KIESHA LALAMA

"What an absolute thrill it was to spend some time with your students. I am energized and inspired by the massive scale and scope of talent. I am in complete awe of the program you developed! Endless congratulations on your success and the marvelous human beings and elite talent across the disciplines."

Kiesha Lalama

SAVE THE DATE! MONDAY, MARCH 23rd

This year's artistic partnership between Signature Theatre and Fairfax Academy's Musical Theatre & Actor's Studio will come to an exciting conclusion with the fifth annual Signature Spotlight Showcase, an end-of-year performance in front of casting directors, agents, and industry stakeholders, where invited seniors from our Pre-Professional Musical Theatre course will highlight their growth and talent. And one graduating senior will even be selected to participate in Signature Theatre's *Overtures: Musical Theatre Institute* at no cost!

The evening will feature songs, dance, and monologues from seniors enrolled in the Pre-Professional Musical Theatre course who are beginning their post-secondary careers...many, in the performing arts.

Hosted by Signature in their MAX Theatre, we hope you will join us for this celebratory culmination of hard work and give these students a theatrical send-off as they continue to the nation's top performing arts colleges and conservatories!

Monday, March 23rd

A LOOK AHEAD

**Wednesday, February 4th –
Sunday, February 8th**

"How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" Production Run

Monday, February 9th

Set-Strike
3:30-7:30pm

Tuesday, February 10th

Academy Open House
6:30-7:30pm

Monday, February 16th

No School

Tuesday, February 17th

Student Holiday

**Wednesday, February 18th –
Friday, February 20th**

In-Studio Guest Artist:
Valerie Karasek